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ABSTRACT

Although much has been written in support of a student development role for the student affairs professional, research documentation is lacking on the contributions made by student affairs staff to the development of students. A simple research methodology, which could be easily replicated on college campuses, to begin providing these missing data was field tested at one state university. Student affairs personnel completed a three-part questionnaire covering their contributions to the educational climate of the campus, research activity, and the publishing of professional books, journals, and in-house publications. Each educational/instructional response was to include the topic, academic format and developmental focus of all presentations made, and other relevant information. The results described a broad range of activities for these student affairs professionals: credit-bearing courses; student staff development lectures, seminars, or workshops; staff presentations to off-campus groups; consulting experiences; a continuing education conference; activities promoting student, faculty, and staff interaction; informational lectures and research projects; and various publications. This evaluation approach should be appropriate to most campuses wishing to document the activities of their student affairs personnel. (Response data are presented in tables to provide a useful method for quantification, a clear display of the divisional activities, and a detailed statement of the academic credentials of the persons sponsoring each activity.) (NRB)

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Student Affairs Educational Activities Research: A Method for Measuring and Documenting Performance Achievement

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Student Affairs Educational Activities Research:
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Much has been written advocating, justifying and/or defining a student development role for the student affairs professional (Sanford [1967], Heath [1968], Hunt [1970], Kohlberg [1969, 1972], Moos [1973], and Miller and Prince [1976]). Miller and Prince (1976), for instance, define student development to be the application of human development concepts to postsecondary settings so that everyone involved can master increasingly complex developmental tasks, achieve self-direction, and become interdependent.

However, while the literature is extensive regarding advocacy, rationale, theories, models and assessment of college student development, research documentation is lacking on the contributions made by student affairs staff to the development of students. The American College Personnel Association Tommorrow's Higher Education Project (1975) outlines basic strategies for student development, i.e., instruction, consultation and milieu management, yet the documentation of such activities on various campuses

remains sparse. The purpose of this study was to field test a simple research methodology which could be replicated easily on college campuses to begin providing these missing data. We hope to enable colleges to systematically inventory the student development initiatives executed by student affairs staff, as well as related educational activities which support or enhance the visibility of such programming. A further aim was to classify and display the data so that it could be easily understood by and credible throughout the university community.

METHOD

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire distributed to the various student affairs directors and by them to their staffs at a state university with 83 student affairs professionals and some 16,000 students. The three-part questionnaire covered contributions to the educational climate of the campus, research activity, and staff activity in the publishing of material including professional books, journals and in-house publications. Each educational/instructional response was to include the topic, academic format and

developmental focus of the presentation and other pertinent details.

The definitions of academic formats included lectures: presentation of new material by a leader; seminars: relatively small groups in which group members contribute material; and workshops: leader direction of a group working on a project or topic. The focus of a presentation was defined as student development: the application of human development concepts in the education of the student; staff development: activities to help staff to enhance student development; informational activity: given solely to convey data; or structured developmental student- faculty group interaction initiated by student affairs. The groups attending were identified as student, faculty, staff, or off-campus constituencies. The same definitions were used for the research and publication portions of the survey.

RESULTS

The responses were displayed on tables that classified the material first by the three major areas of the survey: educational/instructional, research, or

publication activity, and then by the focus of the activity (i.e., credit-bearing courses, student development, staff development, information activities or interaction). Similarly, the research and the publication activities were classified by either their informational or student development focus. Each table showed the activity by its academic format (i.e., lecture, seminar, or workshop), and the department that conducted it. The individual topics were listed, with the name and academic credentials of the sponsoring professional, number of times given during the three years, the group attending, and the average number attending.

The simplicity of the questionnaire and of the tables that displayed the results have made the information readily accessible. It is easy, for instance, to review in each table the contributions of the admissions office or the resource commitment of the vice presidential area to student development topics or to departmental research. Also, the academic credentials of each professional are readily apparent, as well as the academic format in which each topic was presented (see sample table).

Educational/Instructional Activities Survey: Spring 1981 - Fall 1983
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES — WORKSHOPS

Workshop Topic	Staff	Presented to	Average # of Participants	Times Given	Total Students
DIVISION: COUNSELING CENTER					
1. Suicide and Depression	A. Byrnes, Ph.D., Associate Director	Peer counselors, Bridge-to-Somewhere	90	2	180
2. Crisis Intervention	A. Byrnes, Ph.D., Assoc. Dir.	Sis-Bro peer counselors	105	1	105
3. Sexuality for Training Incoming Student Orientation Leaders	B. Silberman, MSW Counselor	Student Orientation Leaders	20	3	60
4. Lesbian Sexuality & Clinical Social Work Issues	B. Silberman, MSW Counselor	Social Work students	30	3	90
5. Stress Management	. Shepard, MSW Counselor	Peer counselors	30	3	90
			275		525
DIVISION: HSC					
1. Racism and Sexism	E. Schetlin, Ed.D. Dir./Student Services	Entering students	20	1	20
DIVISION: RESIDENCE LIFE					
1. Student Leadership Development Program Residence Life & Student Union	J. Stein, MS, MBA, Assoc. Dir. & Staff C. Vazquez, MSW, Quad Dir. K. Mendelsohn, MS, Activ. Dir.	Campus student community	30	1	30
2. Rape Awareness	P. Patterson, BA, Residence Hall Director	Student Staff Students	10	1	10
			40		40
DIVISION: STUDENT UNION AND ACTIVITIES					
1. In Service Student Staff Development	D. Timmann, MS, Asst. Director of Operations	Student Bldg. Managers	15	6	90
2. Student Manager Staff Orientation	D. Timman, MS, Asst. Director of Operations	Student Bldg. Managers & other students	28	6	168
3. Radio Station Training	N. Prusslin, BA, General Manager, WUSB-FM	Undergraduates	50	6	300
4. Leadership Styles	K. Mendelsohn, MS, Director Student Activities	Undergraduates	20	1	20
5. Leadership Development for Resident Hall Govt. Officers	K. Mendelsohn, MS, Director Student Activities	Stage XII leaders, College Leg., Quad Councils, RHA	30	1	30
6. Time Management - (Opening Week Activities Program)	B. Fornadel, MS, Director of Student Union & Activities	Freshperson	50	3	150
7. In-Service Student Staff Development	L. Hammerslag, BA., Asst. Dir. of Studt. Activities	Union Information Desk Staff	30	6	180
			223		938
DIVISION: STUDENT UNION AND ACTIVITIES					
1. Student Leadership Develop. Program Student Union and Residence Life	K. Mendelsohn, MS, Activ. Dir. & Staff C. Vazquez, MSW, Quad Dir. J. Stein, MS,MBA, Assoc. Dir.	Students	35	1	35
		Totals:	593		1558

The results described a broad range of activities such as credit-bearing courses; student staff development lectures, seminars or workshops; staff presentations to off-campus groups; several consulting experiences; a 1-day conference for Continuing Education credit; seminars, workshops and other activities through which students, faculty, and staff could interact; informational lectures; informational research projects; student development staff or office publications; and informational publications. A quantitative display of these returns also was constructed.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study are impressive both in terms of the data generated and the implications for other campus student affairs divisions. A broad range of educational/instructional activities were documented as being sponsored, developed and executed by student services staff. Thus, in spite of some of the limitations of self-reported data, the study allows for credible analysis and improvement of the relationship of these activities to student development theories and any existing curricular themes of a given institution.

In the case of the institution studied, the data revealed that the educational activities impacted each of the following developmental areas for students outlined by Chickering (1978): (1) achieving competence; (2) managing emotions; (3) becoming autonomous; (4) establishing identity; (5) freeing interpersonal relationships; (6) clarifying purposes; and (7) developing integrity. Further, the study instrument has been useful as a diagnostic planning tool, since the following future planning needs of the university student affairs program became apparent:

1. The need for a more structured and coordinated overall approach to its developmental program;
2. The need for improved sequencing, relating and tracking of its educational offerings;
3. The need for increased and systematic quality and outcome assessment of its developmental activities;
4. The need for department head analysis of the relationship and impact of its student development activities on the performance of other department service responsibilities.

It will be possible through further analysis to identify in detail the levels of contribution and

participation (i.e. by male/female and minority/majority professionals, as well as to identify how well minority concerns are being handled within the larger community). This information in turn will provide direction for staff development and research to identify additional areas of growth.

The data generated by this research also has significant implications for the programmatic relationship between the academic and student affairs areas. The faculty is better informed of the student affairs investment in the student development process and is better able to understand the relationship of the area's human development goals to the institution's overall educational mission. Thus, the professional and scholarly image of the student services professional is enhanced in the eyes of faculty. Also, the findings of the study give recognition to the academic departments engaged in collaborative co-curricular offerings. Further, data are provided which support planning for increased curricular collaboration between the academic and student affairs components. This, in turn, can motivate increased individual faculty involvement in student development

initiatives beyond the traditional classroom environment.

Though replication of the methodology at other colleges is necessary to support the assertion, it is the opinion of the researchers that the developmental activities reported through the study are typical of those found at most higher education institutions. It is important to note that the research methodology is flexible in that where appropriate the questionnaire items may be modified to address the unique features of a specific campus. The subsequent display of data on tables can provide a useful quantification of the data, a clear display of the divisional activities, and a detailed statement of the academic credentials of the individuals sponsoring each activity, which should be appropriate to most, if not all, campuses.

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